SPRING 1954

CORADDI

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CORADDI

Phyllis Birkby

ebba freund MR. QUILN

Mr. Quiln was six years old when he discovered that he possessed the ability to see through people. Of course, at the time, he did not realize what had happened, but when he was older he remembered that that day had been the beginning of it.

Up to that time he had been an average little boy living in an average house under the supervision of average parents. When he was all dressed up in a new suit his mother would pick him up and squeeze him and rub noses with him. However, when she was dressed up, she would stand back from him and bend down to deposit a moist kiss on his forehead. He remembered his father as a man who went away in the morning and returned that same evening. Sometimes he would bring with him a balloon or a tin horn or a three cornered hat made out of a newspaper.

They were sitting at Sunday dinner eating fried chicken and rice and peas; or they were all dressed up to go for a ride; or perhaps Mr. Quiln had just wakened from a nightmare and had crept downstairs to reassure himself that his parents were sitting where he had left them, and not dangling by their necks from a blue coatrack. It was one of these times, or one like it, when Mr. Quiln saw through his father. He looked at him and saw that behind the familiar blue suit and brown shoes lay a long road down which a small figure plodded, his eyes fixed on his feet. He only looked up to glance at the road signs which said: Morning . . . Noon . . . Evening . . . Sunday. Morning. Noon. Evening . . .

After that, Mr. Quiln could no longer look at his father without seeing the long road and the lonely figure.

Mr. Quiln grew as all little boys grow. He played baseball in the street and cowboys in the house. At school he learned the products which the people of the Belgian Congo export and who wrote the poem under the Statue of Liberty—although he could never remember the poem itself. In the summer he would go to a seaside camp from which he would return brown and happy.

Altogether he was a normal boy except for one thing: he saw through people. He could never forget being thrown out of a Sunday School class for laughing in the middle of a prayer. He had been peeping through his fingers at Reverend Hampton when suddenly through him he had seen a big golden door with Ladies Rest Room written on it in wavy pink letters.

Sometimes Mr. Quiln cried when he saw through people. After he had seen through his Uncle Tom and seen a big triangular box in which was another triangular box in which was another and so on until the last box in which there was nothing but a deflated tennis ball, he had cried bitterly because he wanted to be just like his Uncle Tom when he grew up. But now that he had seen through Unicle Tom, Mr. Quiln no longer wanted a life of traveling with brown suitcases that had red and blue stickers pasted all over them.

When he was thirteen, Mr. Quiln fell in love. Miss Elleron was his English teacher. She was a small woman and would perch on the desk at the front of the room and read poetry in a soft voice which would make the girls sigh and the boys squirm in their seats. She had mossy brown hair which she gathered in a bun at the nape of her neck. Sometimes, while half-listening to her explanation of the proper placement of commas, Mr. Quiln would stare at Miss Elleron's hair and imagine how it would tumble down her back if he were bold enough to pull out the hair pins.

Toward the end of the year, a year of bliss for Mr. Quiln, Miss Elleron assigned the class a story to write.

That night Mr. Quiln sat at his desk in his room and began to write the story that he had lived so many times during Nature Study and during the sermon at church and during English when Miss Elleron explained grammar. He wrote, in his best and most careful handwriting, of a boy and woman who go for a walk in the woods. They stroll down a mossy green path until they come to a tumbling waterfall. There they sit down on the cold grey rocks and the woman reads poetry to him in a low throbbing voice. After a while the boy leans over to the woman and unloosens her hair so that it cascades down her back in soft brown waves. Then they go home.

Every evening during the following week, Mr. Quiln went up to his room after supper and read his story aloud to himself, changing a word here and a phrase there. Then he would go to bed, half hoping, half dreading that Miss Elleron would ask him to read his story in class.

The day the story was due in, Mr. Quiln had not been able to eat any breakfast, and when Miss Elleron called on him to read his story to the class he was afraid that his stomach would rumble. He stood up, cleared his throat, and began to read. His voice shook as he read the first sentence, but soon the familiar words captured him and carried him back to his room where he was alone pouring his love for her into his reading.

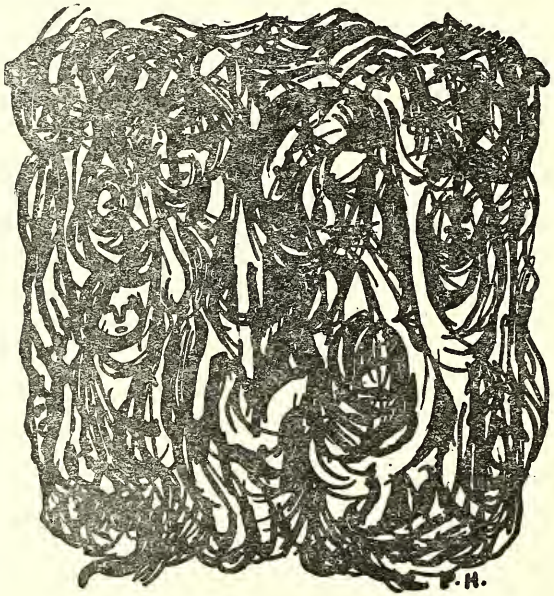
When he came to the waterfall part, he looked up toward the desk. Miss Elleron was sitting with her

arms folded on the desk in front of her. She was gazing at a point two inches above his head as if she were looking for something there.

Mr. Quiln looked at her and saw through her. He beheld a faceless woman lying on a bed which was surrounded by boys six inches high, struggling to get up on the bed. He saw one of the boys climb up the bedpost, onto the bedspread. As soon as he had come on the bed, he had grown until he was full-sized. Then she pushed the boy away, off the bed and into a pink waste-paper basket.

Mr. Quiln saw this and quickly looked back down at the paper from which he had been reading. He tried to read the next sentence, but his Adam's apple seemed to have swollen to such a size that it blocked the sounds of the words he formed with his lips. He sat down, hoping that Miss Elleron and the class would think that the story had ended. They did, and Miss Elleron suggested that he drop by after class next week so that she could talk the story over with him.

Mr. Quiln stared down at his desk the rest of the period, wondering why he was not happy that Miss Elleron liked his story. At the end of the period he was not surprised to discover that he no longer loved Miss Elleron. He did not hate her either; he was just indifferent to her.



Pat Hutson

For the next few days Mr. Quiln was vaguely unhappy. He wandered around the house, picking up magazines, throwing them down again, going to the kitchen and opening the icebox door and then closing it without getting anything to eat. His mother told him to stop moping around and go out and play, and he went outdoors and played with the dog. Then summer came and school was over. Mr. Quiln went away to camp, where he earned his Intermediate swimming badge, and he was happy again.

When he was eighteen, Mr. Quiln attended the junior college in his home town. He was very happy during these two years, for his mind and heart were full.

He met new people and was dazzled by them. He would go to class and sit on the front row and dutifully copy down exactly what the professor had said. After class he would join the small group clustered around the professor's desk and there he stood, looking and listening, listening and looking. Then he would go with this group to some corner of the campus and hear the eldest and wisest and most eloquent student repeat what the professor had said. Afterwards he would go home to his room and read the titles which had peppered the monologue of the eldest and wisest and most eloquent of the students.

He read these books and was impressed by them. He kept a sheet of paper on the inside of his closet door, and on this sheet he listed the titles and authors of all the books he had read. Sometimes, when he went to the closet to get a clean shirt, he looked at this list and marveled how long it had become. Then he would get out his shirt, put it on, read the list aloud to himself, and stride out to the campus.

He did new things and was overwhelmed by them. Every night, he would return from a lecture or concert or a panel discussion and fall into bed exhausted but unable to sleep. Lying there staring out of the window, he was wretched when he thought about the horrible state of the world, as expressed in the last lecture he had attended or the last book he had heard discussed. But then he would sit up and hug his knees in rapture as he thought of the ways in which Mr. Quiln would save the world.

At first he believed that he could save the world through religion, and planned to study for the ministry until he took a course which "read the Bible for its prose." Then he decided to become an English major so that he could demonstrate the truths of life to the blind rabble. In turn he picked up Phychology, History, and Physics between thumb and forefinger, examined them, and discarded each because it was not exactly what he wanted to go into.

He finally submitted to the advice of his practical relatives and transferred to the State University to study Pre-law.

The University did not quite live up to his expectations. He had hoped to find the realization of his dreams there, but he found only bigness in size, pettiness in action, and sluggish narrow-mindedness in ideas. He met new people and they bored him. He read new books and they depressed him. He did new things and they disgusted him.

He also began seeing through people again. During his two years at the Junior College, Mr. Quiln had been so busy watching people that he had never

thought about looking through them. Consequently, he had not seen through anyone and had begun to believe that this was a peculiar faculty which had faded with adolescence. But here at the University he began seeing through people again.

He saw through his professors and despised them; he saw through his classmates and ignored them. In fact, he saw through everybody but his roommate, Bo, who came from a farm in the mountains where he would have remained the rest of his life if the alumni had not given him a red convertible and a full scholarship. He was a big boy with faded blue eyes that remained expressionless throughout his four year's stay at the university.

In the evenings the two of them would sit in their room in the dormitory until Bo would fling down his text, "Methods of Teaching Games", and announce that he was going to The Bucket to get a beer.

Often Mr. Quiln would go with Bo. He enjoyed going with Bo because he could not see through him. And the two boys would go to The Bucket, and have a few beers, and come back to the dormitory and go to sleep.

One night when they were stumbling back after they had drunk a bit more than usual, they had to stop because Bo felt ill. They sat down under the Battle Oak to which Robert E. Lee had once tethered his horse, but Bo had to get up and go behind the tree to be sick.

He came back and sat down by Mr. Quiln who was mumbling up to the heavy branches. Mr. Quiln interrupted his soliloquy to offer Bo a cigarette and then he began to recite *The Hollow Men* in deep mournful tones because this poem was for him reality.

He stopped suddenly in the middle of a phrase and clutched Bo by the shoulder. "Bo," he said, "I am going to tell you something that I have never told anybody. I am going to tell you, though."

"What?" said Bo.

"Bo, do you know what I was reciting?"

"Yeah, something about straw men and rats or something. Yeah, I know."

"But the title, Bo? Don't you remember the title?"

"Naw, but it don't matter. I remember 'bout the rats."

Mr. Quiln shook Bo. "Bo, the name of that poem is '*The Hollow Men. The Hollow Men.*' "

"Yeah?" Bo's stomach was beginning to churn again.

"Bo," Mr. Quiln looked into Bo's blue eyes. "You see, to me all men are hollow. All except you but that doesn't matter now. But I see through people. They're all hollow. They're all empty."

"Gee," said Bo.

"And do you know what, Bo?" he said. "Do you know what I see?"

"Naw, what?"

"I see ugliness. I see filth. Everything that I despise I see when I look through people . . . Bo, do you know what?"

"Uh huh."

"Bo . . . I can never love anyone. I cannot love someone I have seen through. I couldn't love my father or my Uncle Tom . . . Bo, I will never be able to love a woman." Mr. Quiln gasped for breath. "Bo, I cannot love hollow men. I cannot love a woman made of straw."

Pat Hutson

Bo considered kissing a straw mouth and shuddered.

Mr. Quiln did not say anything.

After a while they got up and went back to the dormitory. He had handled raving drunks before, and he gently persuaded Mr. Quiln to go to bed. Then he went to the bathroom to be sick again.

When Bo had gone, Mr. Quiln got up from the bed and crossed the room to the dresser. He stood in front of the mirror and looked into it. He blinked his eyes because the figure in the mirror was not himself. In the mirror, instead of his own reflection, was a straw man dancing in the wind. With a shudder Mr. Quiln shut his eyes, hoping that if he kept them closed long enough, the apparition in the mirror would go away. He stood there, weaving, swaying on his feet, and he remembered the first time that he had seen through anyone. He remembered that time, and then he remembered Uncle Tom and Miss Elleron and all the others. He remembered and saw them again, but this time, for the first time he saw them as they had really appeared, not as they had been when he had seen through them. He saw his father bringing him and his mother little presents; he saw Uncle Tom laughing as he came in the door of the house and hugged Mother; he saw Miss Elleron bending over 'Stupid Joe's' desk showing him a Van Gogh picture. He saw them—and all the others—and all at once he was not afraid to open his eyes.

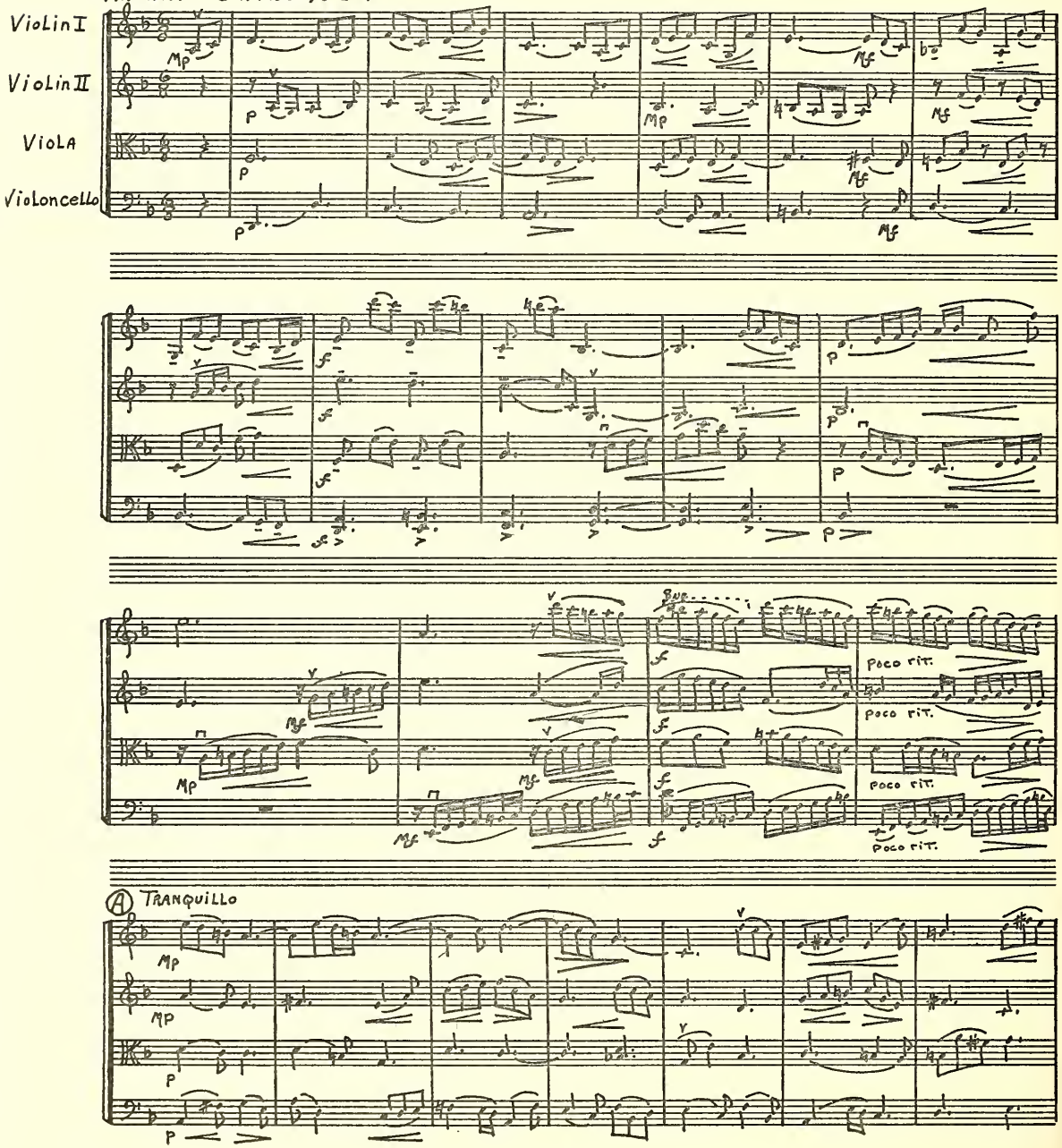
When he looked at the mirror and saw in it his own familiar image, he wanted to lean toward the cold glass and kiss it.

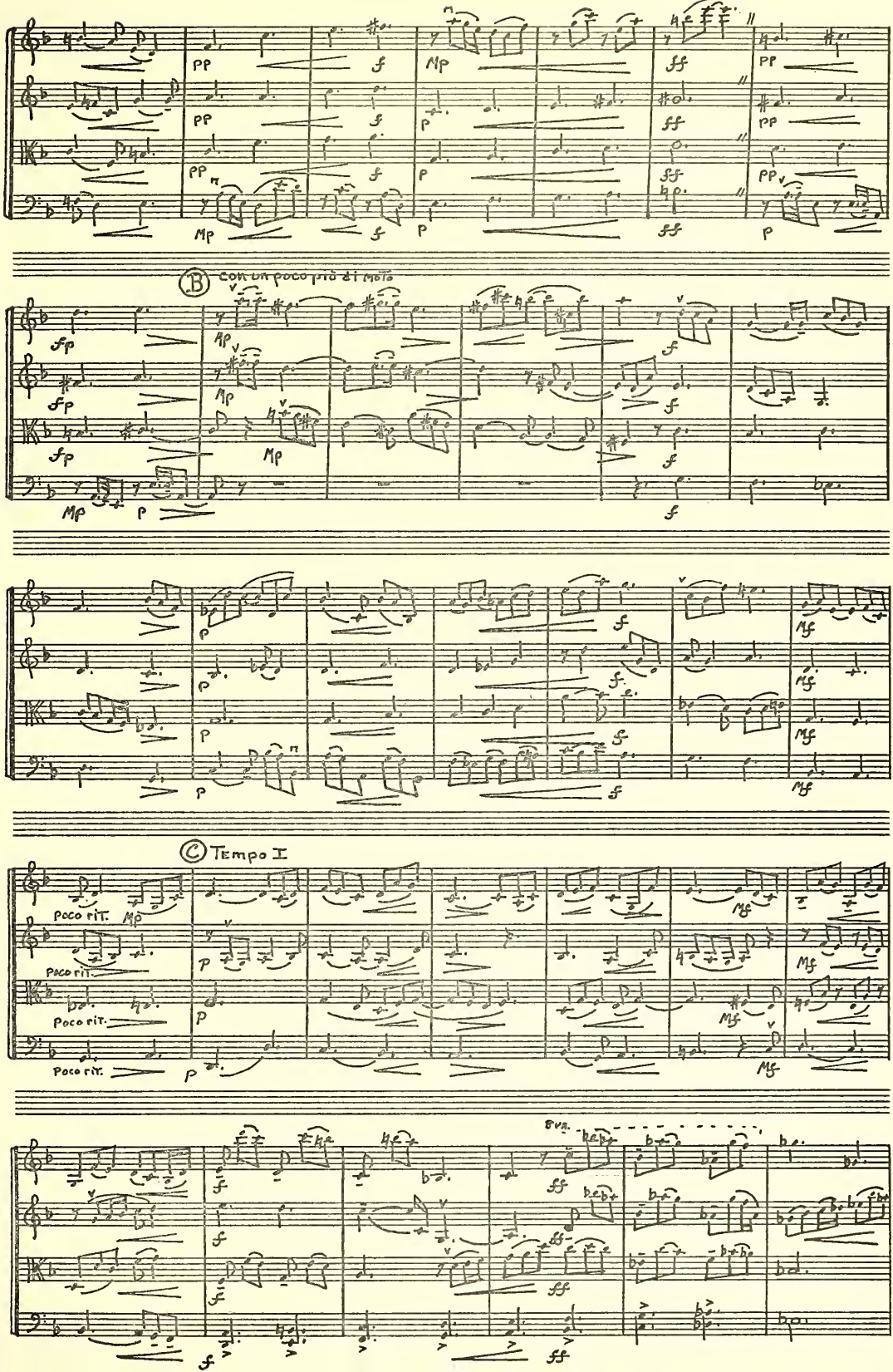
When Bo came back in the room, he found Mr. Quiln passed out on the floor. He picked him up and carried him over to the bed. As he took off Mr. Quiln's shoes for him, Bo heard him murmur, "I love you, Bo."

STRING QUARTET

JULIA DESKINS

ANDANTE con moto, ♩.=54

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C Tempo I
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TERRILL SCHUKRAFT

THE VALLEY

There must have been a cricket under every blade of grass the night they reached the mountains. The breathless, incessant murmuring rose out from the insides of the hills themselves. Gwen tried to think why some people called the sound harsh, because to her it was soft and gentle.

"Pete," she asked, "do you think the crickets sound harsh?"

He smiled. "In a way, Gwen. Why?"

"I was just wondering why people call them harsh —they didn't sound like that to me," she said.

"Maybe it's because the sound is rasping when you hear a cricket close to you, Gwen." His voice was very soft, and he drove without looking away from the road, even when he reached over to change the radio station.

She thought about it for a while, but the car lulled her into a half-sleep—a restless one, full of the small fears of meeting Pete's family here in the Valley for the first time. And why wasn't the crickets' song soft? She loved it.

She was curled up in the seat, almost asleep, when Pete woke her. "We're coming into the Valley now," he said. "I want you to see something."

The crickets were quiet now. It was night, and there was a heavy fog that made driving difficult. Pete said, "You know, it isn't fog at all—it's just low clouds that cover the tops of the mountains. On the other side of this range we'll reach a few places overlooking valleys where there'll be breaks in the clouds. If the moon's shining . . . well, we'll see."

They turned a rising curve, beyond which there seemed to Gwen to be nothing at all. Pete stopped the car on the roadside and put his arm about her, pointing out the window with his arm.

They were at an overlook above a small valley completely enclosed by mist-obscured hills. The clouds lay motionless in masses between the mountain crests, and the little valley was open and clear in the moonlight. It was a whole miniature world: Gwen could see amber farmlights scattered on the slopes of the mountains and in the valley—close amber lights contrasting with the open whiteness of the moonlight. She caught her breath, trying to keep what she saw from changing. It all lay there, as though in her very grasp, but she did not want to touch it.

Pete's arm tightened about her slightly. "We have to go on now," he said. But he didn't move to start the car.

She looked up at him, smiling a little. It was a sober kind of smile—the kind that curves tremulously between sadness and an almost hysterical fear. And looked back from him to the veiled and open valley.

He started the car and drove off slowly. She watched until a rocky ledge, naked in the moonlight, rose up beside the road to shut the valley away again.

Pete turned the radio on. In the distance to come over the ridge into the central Valley Gwen sat quietly listening to the music.

Pete's mother was so far different from Gwen's. She was small and rather stocky, with the most contented, quietest expression on her face that Gwen had ever seen. She wore bluejeans a good part of the time, and her grey hair was shingled in the fashion of fifty-year-old women—Gwen couldn't help comparing her to her own mother, who at forty looked prematurely grey but wasn't.

Gwen slept late the morning after they arrived. When she awoke she heard people moving outside. She pulled her shade up and the sun rushed in. Pete and his father were out looking at the chickens.

The sun hurt her eyes—she pulled the shade down a little and turned away from the window. She dressed and went downstairs. There was no one in the kitchen. She stood there, not knowing whether to go out and announce herself or to try to put together her own breakfast from whatever she could find. She had just about decided against having breakfast and only to drink a cup of the coffee that was still on the stove, when Mrs. Lambert came in the back screen door.

"Up already," she said, laughing. "You sit down right there," (pointing to a chair at the table) "and I'll fix you something to eat. Want your eggs fried,

scrambled, poached—what?"

"Whatever's easiest," Gwen said, smiling. "It doesn't matter."

"Look here, honey," Mrs. Lambert said. "You can't get away with that in this place. You ask for what you want or you won't get anything." Her soft laugh gentled the brusque words.

Gwen blushed. "I guess scrambled," she said.

Mrs. Lambert sat and talked with Gwen while she ate breakfast. Pete came in once for a glass of water, smiled at Gwen and said Good morning, stood behind her with his hands on her shoulders while his mother told him about his older sister's new baby, and then left to work with his father on the truck garden. They were planting the late corn—he'd be busy till the middle of the afternoon, he told Gwen, but they would take a short ride up to a natural spring he wanted her to see.

Mrs. Lambert smiled at Gwen. "We were all so sleepy when you two came in last night," she said. "Now I'll have to get to know you. Pete's written us what he called 'everything' about you—I've wanted to meet you for a long time."

Gwen laughed at his directness. She was beginning to feel like a new calf Pete had brought back with him for his family to look over.

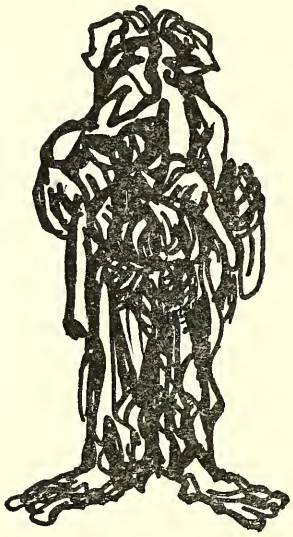
She spent the morning answering questions while she ate, dried the dishes Pete's mother washed, and cut up carrots and potatoes for a stew. Yes, she was sixteen, had slept well, had to go to school another year, loved the farm, hadn't gone out with many boys except Pete, thought he was wonderful—and got tired of answering questions.

At last Mrs. Lambert reached across the table and took her hand. "You're very young, honey," she said. Gwen drew away slightly. Mrs. Lambert sighed. "Sometimes I wish I were your age again . . . I was married then, so young." She picked up the bowl of chopped carrots and potatoes and took them to the stove. On her way she said to Gwen, "Why don't you go ask Karen to tell everyone dinner will be ready in about a half hour?"

In the middle of the afternoon Pete's little sister Karen wanted to show Gwen the new kittens. Gwen had never known how to talk to children, but Mrs. Lambert seemed to expect her to go with the child, so she tagged after Karen to the shed. It was the first time she had been outside the house in the daylight. Looking around she had the feeling that the Valley was so deep between the mountains that they were about to push themselves over onto the farm. She shuddered slightly, and hurried on behind Karen.

The kittens were only a week old, so that their eyes were just beginning to show dark sea-blue. Karen picked one up by the nape of the neck, fondled it for a moment, and then placed it carefully in Gwen's lap. The little creature nestled there, half-asleep. Gwen was afraid it would slide off if she moved.

"Hold him in your hand," Karen said—"he's so small he'll fit, all curled up. Look—hold out your hand." And she picked the kitten up and put it into Gwen's outstretched hand. Gwen held it for a moment, and then cradled it close to her. It was an ugly little thing, with its staring eyes and its too-warm, moist fur. It lay in her hand trembling, and wriggling toward one of Gwen's fingers ,hoping perhaps that this smooth bare thing might be its mother.



Pat Hutson

An old furry terrier came into the shed. Karen laughed. "Trixie's been wanting in here ever since the kittens came," she said. "It's a good thing for you, Trixie, that mother cat's not here."

Trixie had found the litter of kittens, and was pushing them aprt with her nose. Her ears were cocked stiffly forward, listening to the little disturbed mews.

Gwen looked back at the kitten she had. He had found her finger and was sucking on it ravenously, with slight smacking sounds as he tried to get a better hold.

Suddenly Karen cried out, "No, Trixie—get out!" Gwen looked up. The dog was lying down on the kittens; her old blind eyes were anxious when she couldn't find them—she poked about with her nose searching for them. Gwen reached forward to pull Trixie off the kittens, but the dog snarled and snapped at her hand when she felt it. Gwen cried out.

"What is it?" Pete ran in. He saw Trixie lying on the kittens, and broke into laughter. He took her collar and pulled her up out of the little nest. One of the kittens lay still. Karen picked it up. "It's dead," she said. Gwen looked it, still and ugly; she took it from Karen. It felt like a little broken doll, squashed and empty.

Pete took it away from her, and threw it far away from the shed into a grove of bushes and trees. "Come on, honey," he said to Gwen. "It's no good to us now."

They walked up to the house. "Now let's take our ride, Gwen," Pete said.

Karen was walking beside them. "Can I go with you?" she asked. "Where are you going?"

Pete frowned. "No, Karen," he said, "I don't think you should go. We might be late getting back."

They were at the door of the house. Karen pulled it open and ran up to her mother. "Mom," she said, "tell Pete I can go driving with them."

Mrs. Lambert put her hand on Karen's shoulder and looked at Pete. There was no expression at all on his face. She patted Karen's shoulder. "Well, dear," she said quietly, "you know your brother knows best. You stay here and help me with dinner."

Karen pulled herself angrily away from her mother and stalked out of the kitchen, chanting, "Big brother knows best . . . big brother knows best. . . ."

They drove over miles of the roads winding through farms of the long level river basin, not talking much. Finally as it was growing darker, they headed into some mountains at the edge of the Valley. Pete started driving fast on these roads that circled around the mountains. Once, going around a turn that doubled back on itself, with the road banked steeply, the car skidded on the hot asphalt, getting traction again as the road straightened. Gwen gasped ,and looked at Pete, frightened so that her eyes felt taut at the corners. Pete glanced at her. "Sorry," he said. "That mule's been going so slow all day—just the air the car whips up feels good." Gwen was tense against the door of the car, afraid to say anything—feeling as she had once when a horse she was riding had bolted, and she couldn't say or do anything to make him stop. Finally Pete looked over at her and slowed down. Gwen couldn't relax. She could not think why she was still trembling.

After a short while Pete reached over and touched her hand. "What are you afraid of, honey?" he said softly.

Gwen shook her head. She wanted to tell him not to touch her.

It wasn't long before they reached the farm. Pete told Gwen to go on in the house while he put the car in the shed. When he came in the house they ate a little left-over food from dinner and afterwards he told her to go to bed because he wanted to get up early in the morning and show her something.

It took her a long time to go to sleep, and when she did she dreamed about a wild black horse that was carrying her, running, up a steep mountain in the rain. He reached the top, and when he stood there looking over the valley below, the rain stopped and the sun shone so brightly that the river in the valley looked like a stream of gold.

Sunny Daniel

The room was still dark when she heard Pete's voice calling her outside her door. She said she was coming, pulled on her jeans and shirt, and went downstairs. He was holding an old leather jacket that looked about her size. "Here," he said, "put this on. It's cold outside." He gave her a cup of coffee in the kitchen, and then they went out.

It was chilly and damp outside. The sky was cloudy, for it had been raining all night, and there was only a hint of light in the east.

They walked away from town toward the river. The cold air gradually woke Gwen from the half-dream feeling of early morning. Pete showed her little things growing along the way, and once a white-tailed rabbit scampered almost from under her feet and raced away. When they came to a small rise above the river bank, Pete stopped. The light was quickly growing brighter now up the river.

"Watch over there," he said, pointing across the river. The horizon was outlined clearly against the clouds, so that Gwen could see nothing to look at. But she watched obediently, knowing that he knew far more about the Valley than she.

It was several minutes before she saw anything. It was a dark, black strip above the "horizon" that grew larger and higher as the clouds lifted. They began to move more quickly, and she saw that the clouds had hidden a mountain range, and that they were lifting now to reveal the whole range. Breathlessly she watched the grey mass of what had seemed sky push itself upward rapidly and irregularly, until finally the great black range lay open to her sight—far across the river, huge and still and magnificent. Finally the whole sky was clear and the crimson and golden beauty of the sunrise soared up behind them. She turned to see it, but she saw Pete's eyes first, and they caught and held hers. She stood there, swaying a little in her stillness, breathing very quickly, seeing only Pete and the sunrise behind him. Only the river sound broke the waiting stillness.

Suddenly she moved and his arms held her hard against him. She stood there with him, her heart beating wildly. He was stroking her back and shoulders with his hands, pressing her to him. Lifting her chin up, he turned his head down to her, bringing his mouth close to hers, and kissed her very gently at first, then hard, pressing her lips so tight against her teeth that it hurt. Then he released her. She felt very small, and very tired.

Back at the farmhouse, Pete led her into the kitchen where his mother was. "Mom," he said jubilantly, "we're going to be married." His mother looked up at them, and smiled.

The black horse, at the top of the mountain, gathered his muscles together, and jumped, and plummeted to the bottom of the valley. Horse and rider lay there, crumpled in a heap, but quite still.

. . . verse continuity for Synthesis

a scheduled production of the Fine Arts Committee of Elliott Hall . . . .

directed by Phyllis Birkby
. . . . music: Bach, Williams, Deskins, Copland
. . . . dances: Lou Wall, Suzanne Rodgers, Julia Hedgepeth, Peggy Malone

introduction

Within the still saturate of abstract time
Happen chance births and deaths,
Broken bits or repetitions of a larger pattern.

When in the instant of his genesis
The dark child breaks his mother,
He holds his death sacred inside him.
His beginning prophesys, predicts
His end; the end remembers
More than one beginning.

Like to one another as brother years
Lives spring up into sun, seed,
And wither to winter, all within
The bare superstructure of time.
The pattern is continuous.
But the first beginning was,
The final end will be,
The greater paradox outside
Our finite, abstract time.

We have only parts of knowledge,
Partial wisdom, only fragmentary
Fragile copies of the whole
To hold within our fingers,
Close our hands upon.

But we have seen it sometimes whole
In dreams, the rationality of soul.
We cannot live it.
But we have seen the pattern sometimes
In song and picture, word and spoken word.

When the song is moved to sing itself,
The dancer to dance in the
Turning light of day,
The song, the dance, the spoken word
Must then perform the pattern.
The dance, and song, and spoken word
Must then make up the picture
And the play.

for Roualt's Christ Mocked by Soldiers

I

The circuit of seasons courses
Around and always up in wider spans,
A half of dark, a half of light.
The spread spring tracks through black reaction
Up to revolution, back through dark.
A man's life may be lived within
The dark half circle, or the burning bush.

The Christ was mocked by soldiers.

O murdered light that will not let us go,
O buried light that can not let us know
Except by suffering, repeat the Christ
To those who suffer.

Rotten empire looked at light
And was afraid. The brute bold soldiers cried
Against the flame that fed on battle,
"Hail, Hail King! King of the Jews!"

O murdered light that cannot let us know
Except by suffering, repeat the Christ
To those who suffer. Come again the Christ
To those who live by night.

II

Christ mocked by soldiers speaks it
In a clearer voice than we can.
Speak too the obscure or consecrated
Saints and martyrs. This we say:
Light does not rule
This anguished world
Of shadows and appearances.

The ancient young have told you.
A man grows wise by grace or years,
And age can be a crown,
The wrinkled forehead a world-high wall
To shut out leaping shadows who
Fling hands up world wall,
Bent to break it down.
But the world as a walled house is, after all,
Only an appearance.

for a painting by Lee Hall

The ancient young with parchment skin
And passive, laughing eyes look down
From high, strong, brush-drawn promontory
Over the world wall into that dark valley
Where shadows slaughter shadows
And wailing shadows bleed.
He sees the shadow evil, sees the good,
And sees the peach tree, pine tree, nut tree,
Money-tree and flowering plum.
Sees the dark Khan marching down
To make a war on China.

for a painting by Kadinsky

Yellow, ancient gold, earth brown
Are folded hands, still deeply living,
In each bone and joint.
His eyes, impassive, see the peach tree,
Water bird and shadowing plum
Grown dim and distant, indistinct
Contained within the shifting
Backward gaze of centuries
At what is not,
The not real,
The things that
Are not there.

He, and the many-armed Krishna, Christ,
See the shadow, see the seasons
All the dark flat flung out map-like.
Knows the light unbound, unburied
Lives inside the wide white spaces
Of the inward, god-turned heart.
They see the shadow as the shadow,
And turn their glowing eyes away.

III

Spoken was the spirit against night.
Recited was the spirit. Here speak
From framed fear, for failure,
For the black, brain-racking hunt
For light by means of the intellect,
The intellect as machine.

We have seen our meaning whole
In dreams, but nightmares can construct
From the geometric dance of the driven mind
Among its shadows, this dry blight of colored metal,
This lasting horror. Sharp-cut, silhouetted, pronged,
Strung along the nerve wire brain-bond
Is the dream of the machine.
Misbegotten and miscarried,
Subject to rust ruin the dream,
Subject to ruin, the machine.

Little man, where in this fear are you?
Little man, shout out to me here
Searching among towering cones, forests
Of triangle steel for only a little,
Little man. Scamper. Scream to the machine
To wait. Follow it. It will lead you
To the valley in shadow. Little man,
Where in this fear are you?

But why call to a little man,
A man we cannot find? Give up the man.

This is the dream of the intellect,
Caught in a self-imposed futility.
The predestined failure, framed.

Here the specific mistake of new time, our time.
Unhuman and alone. The mind cannot see
Without the eye. The eye is prone

for a painting by Maud Gatewood

To accidental vision, unpremeditated unfact
The mind cannot accept. Those sights that cannot
Be conceived by the machine.
The machine is all that we were given,
And we have thrown our eyes, our only vision
To sea birds, crying at night.
This may be simply all for us. This too,
Is well within the realm of what seems
Possibility.

IV

Day circles, night fights day
Each dawn, each evening, witnesses
Day blood seep through the fabric
Of the sky. While this bright battle rages
Fought by neither dark nor light,
One is assailed by memory.

The twilight respite makes a space
To sit and read a Book of Hours,
See the hours filled
With unknown moving figures, bone-built.
Gives a time to know
The one has been, before all things
    And afterward, alone.
    This day of nightmares strikes its colors
Falls to nightmare night,
And we are life and each one reads,
In a book, of all his hours.

Separate, one from another,
We have lost the vision
Of circular unity. Closed
Inside our lives like winking lights
Within a circling dark, we can conceive
No other possibility.
With war and hours
Reflected in the mind's eye,
We have lost sight of our way.

Spoken was the spirit against night.
Remember the spirit. Mark
Its journey through dark and light
To final light. Forget obscuring hours
Single days that seem in memory
To outshine the sun.

This the duty of any art,
To tick off time outside our time,
To set our age against the ages
And of them make some harmony,
Present to us some other, fuller vision.

If the song is to sing itself,
The dancer to dance
In turning light of day,
The song, the dance, the spoken word
Must then perform the picture.
The dance and song and spoken word
Must then make up the picture
And the play.

BLIGHT

SHIRLEY BOWERS

My grandfather used to like to look at boxes. He liked to see the shadow cast by the sides. The shadow started at one corner in a sharp angle, then it ran down, getting wider and wider, and then you couldn't see any more of it because you couldn't see over the edge of the box unless you got up close, and then the shadow looked different, because you had moved. He said it was a matter of perspective.

He liked to look at rocks, too. His fireplace was made of stone. It was big, and the hearth was just one big slab of stone, rough and unfinished. There were odd depressions and lumps in it, and shadows looked good on it too. It would have looked real nice with a fire behind it. But the fireplace itself was all boarded up, with a wide pipe running into the chimney from the wood stove. Having a fire in the fireplace would have been impractical, becausee the wood stove heated the room better. Still, I think my grandfather always regretted boarding up the fireplace.

I used to spend my summers on Grandpa's farm. It was when I was very young, before Grandpa died, and that was four years ago. For such a small child, I remember him very well. After Grandpa died Grandma came to live with us in the city, and I haven't been back to the farm since. I wish they hadn't sold it.

I spent the whole summer before Grandpa died on the farm. As soon as school was out I went to the farm. Grandpa had told me that if I came he would pay me a dollar a week to help him with the tobacco.

During the first part of the summer I worked pretty hard. Every morning Grandpa and I would go out to the tobacco field and work the land and pull weeds. The plants were young and pale green, and they really looked pretty on the red clay earth. You couldn't make anything out of the clay, because it was too hard, but I guess it was all right for the tobacco.

When we weren't working the tobacco Grandpa and I used to go for walks in the woods. He knew just about everything about trees and birds, and he knew a lot about animals, too. We nearly always went the same way, down by the old outhouse my brother used to mark up with chalk. After we passed that we had to climb through a rail fence, and I had to help Grandpa, because he had a bad knee. Then we went into the swamp. There were birch trees there, and whippoorwills, and the air was gray. In the early summer we caught little frogs no bigger than Grandpa's thumbnail, which was really quite large for a thumbnail, and brown and chipped. Grandpa always used to lift me up to see an arrowhead stuck in a tree trunk. He said that he had found it that way, and hadn't moved it because years from now someone else would find it and enjoy it just as he had. I think probably he put it up himself, but it was nice of him.

My grandfather wasn't a big man, but he was wiry. Grandma was almost as tall as he was, but she wasn't nearly as strong. He used to carry big loads of wood into the kitchen for Grandma, and she would frown at him and tell him she really didn't need that much at a time, and she didn't mind carrying it herself, but he just laughed at her after he stopped breathing hard. He carried as much as I could take in in three loads.

Oh, I was talking about the walks we used to go on. We took a lot of walks that summer, because Grandpa didn't need to spend much time in the field that year. He said the Lord was taking care of the tobacco, taking care of it but good, and Grandma would frown at him and say "Robe, don't blaspheme". I can spell that because I asked Grandpa about it, and he told me that it meant something that Grandma thought shouldn't be true.

I guess I really wasn't much help to Grandpa from the middle of July on, because he stopped paying me my dollar. But I had six dollars saved up, so I didn't mind, until one Saturday I wanted to go into the town for a movie and Grandma told me that I shouldn't waste Grandpa's money in that sinful way. I looked at Grandpa and said I thought he had paid it to me, and he just looked at me and told me I'd better stay home that day and go for a walk with him. I didn't really care, except that walking now was dusty, because it hadn't rained for a long time. I didn't mind it when we walked on grass, but when we walked through the fields we kicked up red dust in thick clouds, and it got on our overalls and our shoes, and I had to wash my face when we came back. That afternoon we didn't go by the swamp, but I had been down there the day before and knew that most of the water was dried up. It wasn't even muddy; the silt had dried and cracked, and the bodies of a lot of dead frogs like the ones we had caught earlier in the summer were stuck in the ground. You couldn't even hear a raincrow, and the whippoorwills were quieter than I had ever heard them. The leaves on the trees were drying up and blowing off, and they weren't even turning pretty colors like they do in the fall, they were just dying. It sure was hot.

I guess it was the next week that Grandpa took me to town. He was going to market for Grandma. She didn't like to leave the farm. We drove in in the old Ford. Grandpa was an awful driver. We sure kicked up the dust. When we got to town and went into the store we found a lot of the men sitting around and talking. They usually just did that on Saturday, but I guess the Lord was taking care of their crops, too. Grandpa talked to them a while, then we did the shopping. We had to get flour. Grandpa said the price had gone up. He always said that to Sam. Sam owned

the store. Then we got some other groceries. I was looking at the watermelons. They must have come from a long way off, because all Grandpa's melons had died on the vine that year. It was a bad year for melons. I didn't say anything, but Grandpa saw me looking, then he came over and got a real big melon without speaking to me. Sam just looked at him and added it to the bill. Grandpa always paid up when he sold his crop. Sam gave me a stick of licorice then, and I sat in the window and looked at a comic book. Grandpa was talking to the other men. Pretty soon I heard them talking louder, and then Grandpa came over and grabbed my hand and we started for the door. Grandpa looked mad. He turned around when we got to the door and shouted, "You don't have no faith!" Then we went on out to the car, and while we were driving back to the farm Grandpa was kind of snorting to himself. Every once in a while he would mutter "Bad year indeed!" under his breath. His hair was flying about, because we had the car windows open and the windshield pushed out — it was an awfully old Ford — and there was a hot breeze blowing through the car.

When we got home we took all the groceries in first, and Grandpa looked a little bit odd when we brought the watermelon in. I guess maybe he thought Grandma would say it was a sinful waste. But she didn't say anything. She just went out of the room for a minute, and when she came back her cheeks looked red. The spring was dry, so we couldn't chill the melon, but we had it that night for dessert, and I think Grandma liked it. It would have been better cold, though. I kept remembering how good it would have been if we could have put it in the refrigerator at home for a while. But Grandpa's house didn't have electricity. He said he didn't need it. He had Grandma.

Ellen Farmer

In the first week of August Grandpa decided he'd better have a priming. Some of the top leaves on the tobacco plants were looking pretty bad, and he didn't think they would grow any more, so he wanted to get them off and let the lower ones have the sun. I didn't see why they needed the sun. It sure was hot. It was so hot that I couldn't sleep nights, and I was on the cot on the porch. Grandpa couldn't sleep either, I guess, because he used to wander around the house a lot at night. It sure was hot.

The primers came early one Wednesday morning. They got there about six o'clock. I had to get dressed real quick, because I knew they would be wanting water in the fields, and I was supposed to carry it to them from the well. There were about twelve working that day, besides Grandpa. I always liked priming days, because the men laughed a lot even when they were working, and they would come in at lunch and eat a big meal that Grandma fixed, and then go back to the fields until sundown. But they didn't work long that day, and they were pretty quiet. I guess it was too hot for much joking. They came in and ate lunch, but they didn't eat much, even though Grandma had fixed a real good lunch. She had gone to the cellar shelf and opened some of the cans she had been saving. She put the food up in the safe in the cellar after the primers left. They didn't go back to work after lunch. Grandpa fired the barn that night by himself. They hadn't even got half a barn full of tobacco. The plants hadn't grown much that year. The men were right. It was a bad year.

Grandpa got that barn cured out, but he seemed worried about the tobacco still in the field. He hadn't seemed worried before. He was getting awfully thin, too. I guess that's logical ,since it wasn't long after that that he died. All the farmers wanted rain that year, but Grandpa seemed to want it more than most of the others. He was thinking about taking out a loan on the mortgage, but Grandma talked him out of that. She said they could borrow from the children if they had to. The children were my mother and my Aunt Mae and my two uncles. Grandpa said he didn't want to do that, unless he just had to. He wanted rain bad.

On toward the end of August I was looking forward to going home. I knew things would cool off after school started again. Grandpa wasn't much fun any more. He didn't like to go for walks, even. But I didn't either. The woods were all yellow, and you couldn't hear any frogs croaking, and I had forgotten what a whippoorwill sounded like. Grandpa just sat on the porch or in the yard, whittling wood and squinting at the sky.

One morning I woke up early. It was still hot, but

it felt different. The sun was just rising, and the sky looked real red. I knew something had waked me. Then I heard Grandma and Grandpa moving around in the kitchen. I got up too. I wasn't much sleepy. It was too hot to sleep.

Grandpa seemed cheerful. He told me to look at the sky. It looked real pretty, and I told him so, and he told me I didn't know how right I was. He said rain was coming. Just in time, too. A good rain would save the crop. I sure hoped he was right. I wanted to go back to the swamp again before I went home, and I didn't like to see it dead.

Later in the morning the sky looked real gray. *Real* gray. It was dark, and there was thunder. Grandpa said he was going out to the barn after lunch. I didn't know why he wanted to go there; he couldn't make it rain any sooner by being out. Grandma just snorted at him, and told him he'd better take his boots, that rain on the dusty fields would make a fine mess of his shoes, and they would wear out soon enough the way he treated them anyhow. Grandpa clapped his hands together and did a little shuffle step and called Grandma "Miss Nan," so I knew he really did feel good.

Grandpa went out at about one o'clock. Grandma made me stay in the yard, because she said that when the rain came it would come fast. She sat on the porch with her knitting and just looked at the sky. She looked real pleased.

I was out in the chicken yard chasing the big rooster when the storm broke. The first clap of thunder scared me almost as bad as it did the rooster. He got in the chicken house in a hurry, and I ran back to the porch with Grandma. She looked scared too, and I told her it was just thunder, and she told me that children shouldn't talk back to their elders. I watched the clouds a minute. They were piling up into big heaps and boiling around. Then I went into the house. I didn't feel like playing outdoors any more right then, not even on the porch. You get bored if you do any one thing too long at a time. I decided I would work a jigsaw puzzle. I wished Grandpa would come back to the house. He used to help me with the puzzle pieces that were all one color. He liked puzzles, too.

Grandma stayed on the porch during the whole storm. Once I looked out the door and saw her leaning against the banister, not even trying to shield herself from the storm. I wanted her to come in; I was afraid she might get hit by a hailstone and be hurt. The stones were terribly big. The thunder was crashing all the time, and the lightning was flashing scalding white, and the hail was coming so thick. I was sitting in the big chair, trying to read a comic book. I'm not afraid of storms, it's just that this was an awfully loud storm, and I couldn't concentrate on the comic book.

After a long time the thunder died down, and the lightning was a long way off. There was rain falling steadily now, and I knew Grandma and Grandpa would be pleased. Rain would be good for the crop. Then I heard Grandma yell to me from the porch, and I ran out and saw Grandpa sort of staggering up the walk. Grandma had her arm around his waist, and she was almost carrying him. His clothes were soaked, and his overalls were dripping red mud. We helped Grandpa up the steps and he collapsed on the porch floor. His eyes were open and looked sort of surprised, and he was mumbling something about God and watermelons. He was carrying a big tobacco leaf. It looked like somebody had ripped it all to pieces with a knife. Grandpa's forehead was bleeding a little from where it had been cut by a hailstone. I guess he had been out in the storm, because I found another hailstone that had fallen into the cuff of his overalls and was melting there. It was almost gone when I got it out, and it finished melting in my hand.

After we got Grandpa to bed Grandma sent me to neighbor Lineberry's to ask them to go for a doctor. Then the Lineberrys took me home to the city. It wasn't far. I told Mother that Grandpa was sick and she hurried out to the car and drove to Father's office and got him and they went back to the farm. They didn't even leave me any supper. When my brother got home from playing baseball we fixed sandwiches. Mother and Father came back the next morning and told us that Grandpa was dead.

I didn't go to the funeral, but Mother told me that there were a lot of flowers, and she brought me one of them. She told me not to save it after it died, but to put it in water for a while and then throw it out. She said Grandpa hadn't liked for people to keep dead flowers or stuffed animals. The flower lived four days.

Grandma came to live with us after that. She sold the farm. Last week she died.

poem

So wrestle til doom comes to you!
  fight and stir in your weakling back
as though it would do the thing out for you!
Who has not taught you to see,
  to hear, to avoid,
  to lament
  to pray, and to speak
all with reservations?

You, who now go clashing your shadow's armor
and thrilling to the clanging that it brings.
You who hate the bitterness of seasons yet love the
  cruelty of beauty.
You are the child of Dionysius
  and in truth, you follow
  the dictates in being of his nature.

I am pained, yet torn without blood.
I am still with my hands,
  but my heart has too many companions.

The bitter season is a person
  whose climate assails without kindness
Of seasons memories-past.

So blow the wind or cool the breeze!
I am silent only to be guided
  by that climate that comes
in its own trueness,
coming with no hypocracy in what it is!
I wait, and have avoided only too long.

Sweet impatience of the wrestling soul,
  what is the end you see
  in the on-coming wind,
  the sun, the night,
  the day of new climate's truth?

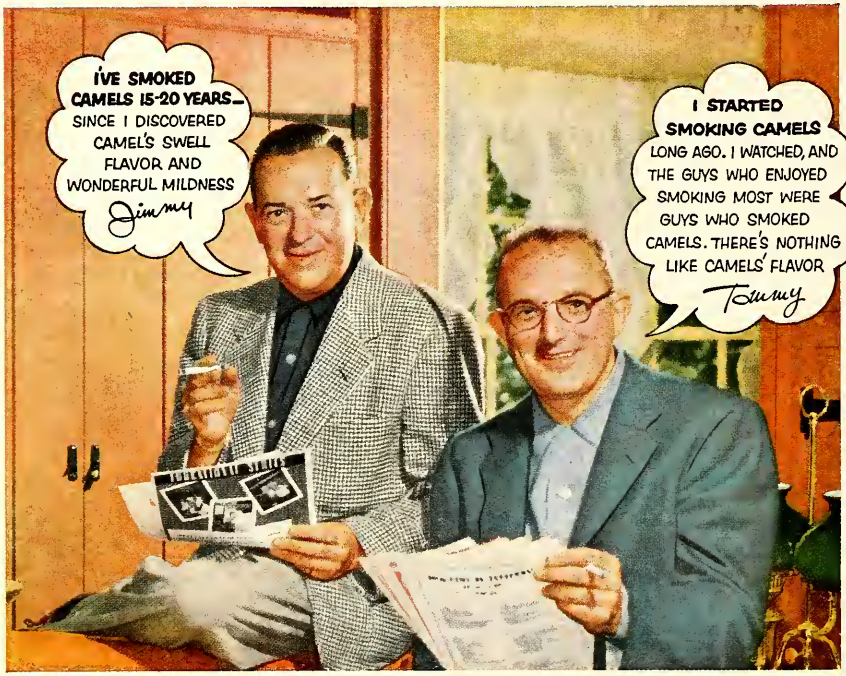
I have no course in the wind—
  I am waiting.
I have no warmth from its sun—
  I shall wait again.
I have not rest in night's shadow—
  I am waiting.
I have not seen day's end
  and I shall wait again.

Phyllis Birkby

HOW THE STARS GOT STARTED...

Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey say: "Our Dad led the brass band in our home town. He started us on our way tooting in the band when we were eight years old. We watched and studied successful musicians as much as we could, worked real hard and, little by little, began to get there."

THE FABULOUS DORSEYS



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